

REMARKS

Claims 8 through 10 and 13 through 20 are in this application and are presented for consideration. By this amendment, Applicant has combined the subject matter of claims 11 and 12 into claim 8. Similar additions have been made to claim 14. Claims 11 and 12 have been canceled and new claims 15 and 16 (depending on claim 14) have been added. New claims 17 to 20 have also been added.

The changes to claim 8 substantially present the subject matter of claims 11 and 12 in independent form. Claim 14 includes the same issue and is commensurate in scope with claim 8 or is narrower.

Claims 8 through 13 have been rejected as being anticipated by Berger. The rejection was made Final even though Berger was cited for the first time. Applicant believes that this is much closer prior art than had been cited previously. However, the reference fails to teach and fails to suggest the concave edge structure 8, 8' and the convex edge (see revised claim 8 and previously presented, now canceled, claim 12). This structure is particularly useful in allowing a hook friction lock to be provided while also allowing a smooth engagement of the parts. With the structure of Berger, the back engaging surface (see Figure 8) has sharp edges and there is no smooth convex and concave structure as claimed. Instead, Berger teaches planar surfaces, which are not convex and concave. This presents an abrupt step or edge which is encountered in forming the connection. The invention instead provides the smooth convex and concave structure as claimed.

As noted above, the issues are presented in earlier claims 11 and 12. These same issues

are presented in claim 14 with further specificity in combination with the other aspects of claim 14. The subject matter is supported in the specification for example with the “concave arcuate end wall 8” discussed at page 5, lines 4 and 5 and the “concave arcuate wall 8” discussed at page 5, lines 17 through 18. The structure forms the inside and outside joining structure with recesses 9, 9' with the ends having a convex arcuate form. As noted at page 5 and line 24 the contour of the hook 6 precisely corresponds to the contour of the recess 9' and the contour of the hook 6' precisely corresponds to the recess 9 as discussed for example at page 5, lines 21 through 25. With this the hooks 6 and 6' have a convex arcuate contour or convex end.

Claims 14 and 15 highlight the further aspects of this connection with the planar surfaces (see attached sketch) marked A and B with the smooth surface at the convex part joining the inner side (opposite B) with the point at the concave surface joining the inner side (see C).


New claim 17 highlights features similar to claims 8 and 14, including the particular ring structure based on a first partial ring with inner side joining structure and outer side joining structure, with a recess opening to the inner side and a recess opening to the outer side and hook elements. A second partial ring is provided which is an individual ring half of identical design to the first partial ring. These partial rings are centrally symmetrical or rotationally symmetrical (namely rotationally symmetrical with rotation about 180°). This is pointed in the specification for example at page 3, lines 10 through 12. The hook elements are rigid, namely they are non-flexible, non-elastic. With this, there is no catching of the hook structures from behind (in the circumferential direction). Instead, the elements must be

engaged by axial relative sliding to provide a frictional connection. That is the partial rings are designed such that they are held by frictional forces in the axial direction (based on the complimentary type fit (see page 3, lines 23-25). As highlighted in each of claims 8, 14 and 17, the front side of each partial ring has a concave arch shaped surface or wall (see page 5, lines 15 through 21) as well as a convex end surface. Between these two surfaces an angled reactive side of the hook has an inclination. The contour of the hook 6 corresponds exactly to the contour of the recess of the 9' and the contour of the hook 6' corresponds exactly to the recess 9.

The features present significant advantages with regard to a dependable and convenient connection providing a good frictional connection.

As the prior art as a whole fails to suggest these features and as these issues have already been presented, it is Applicant's request that the claims be favorably considered.

Respectfully submitted
For Applicant,

By: 
John James McGlew
Reg. No. 31,903

JJM:jj/jms
71130RCE.15

DATED: May 24, 2005
BOX 9227 SCARBOROUGH STATION
SCARBOROUGH, NEW YORK 10510-9227
(914) 941-5600

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